

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/bloodlines/>

The speaker reflects on a childhood story from the Netherlands about a man in a bow tie, created by their parents to deter them from straying too far from home. This video story, while effective at the time, had lasting implications on the speaker's perception of bow ties and their association with fear. The speaker discusses how this narrative fits into a wider genre of European folklore known as "Kinder Shrek," which they are using to explore antisemitism and xenophobia.

The speaker's research focuses on local and subnational factors that contribute to antisemitism, arguing that existing metrics (like pogrom data and voting patterns) are limited. They collected a dataset from 19th-century folklore that details antisemitic narratives across various German localities, alongside data from the archives of a prominent Jewish organization combating antisemitism. This video research indicates that antisemitism was relatively rare until post-World War I but surged in specific locales, particularly border towns.

The findings reveal that socioeconomic discontent among small farmers and shopkeepers often led to the scapegoating of Jews as international threats, reflecting a broader fear of outside influences exacerbated by socioeconomic struggles. The research suggests that antisemitism and xenophobia are influenced both by local social dynamics and spatial contexts, rather than solely political or economic factors.

The study is part of a larger book project examining various societal fears in Central Europe from the 1860s to the 1930s, aiming to create a unified theory of fear that encompasses not just xenophobia but also fears related to gender, nature, and fantasy.